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Editorial

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Editorial

I am delighted to introduce the 11th issue of the ITB Journal, the academic journal of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown. The aim and purpose of the journal is to provide a forum whereby the members of ITB, visitors and guest contributors from other third level colleges can publish an article on their research in a multidisciplinary journal and thereby share their work with the broader community at ITB and other academic institutions.

The first paper in this issue of the ITB Journal is by Gareth Curran (School of Informatics and Engineering, ITB) and Anthony Murphy (Department of Experimental Physics, NUI, Maynooth) and is concerned with the quasi-optical design and analysis of the Heterodyne Instrument for the Far Infrared (HIFI) on board the European Space Agency's Herschel Space Observatory, which is due for launch in 2007. The paper begins with an introduction to astronomy at submillimetre wavelengths followed by the science that will be carried out by HIFI.

Kevin Martin (ITB), in the second paper, examines the issues of general and Information Literacy among first year students in 3rd level education. He suggests interventions that may help to remediate the problems for some students and help them fulfil their potential. There is increasing recognition that many students entering 3rd level education have literacy difficulties. Also, there are those that have specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia¹ and Dyspraxia². Consideration can also be given to an increasingly diverse student body with greater representation of mature and non-national entrants who may not have English as a first language: easier access for second level students with a consequent drop in academic abilities and to dropping literacy standards in the wider societal context.

The third paper, by Dr. Anna Herwig (TCD), notes that over the past decades it has become generally acknowledged that lexicon and grammar are inseparably linked, constituting a continuum of symbolic structures. Yet, a comprehensive integration of the two realms of knowledge appears to be a difficult task. Her paper offers a unified psycholinguistic perspective, which is centred on the mental lexicon, considering grammatical knowledge as part of the information structure of lexical items. It aims to model the complexity of lexical knowledge such that its perceived psychological reality, including various levels of linguistic description, becomes discernible. In the light of recent research undertaken in different linguistics fields, the mental lexicon can be described as that domain of language where the various dimensions of linguistic information meet. It follows that the elements of the lexicon need to be modelled as highly complex entities, including information on representational substance (conceptual, perceptual, and articulatory patterns) and combinatorial potential.

We hope that you enjoy the papers in this issue of the ITB Journal.

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